

Bluebell School

Kidsgrove Day Service, Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove, Staffordshire ST7 1EH

Inspection date

9 July 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The standards for paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b) continue to be met.
- Leaders ensure that effective arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. For example, staff are effectively trained to manage physical intervention. Incidents of this sort are carefully recorded by leaders and lessons drawn from them are built into the training programme.
- Pupils are well taught how to keep themselves safe online. They know how to report anything that worries them. Staff listen carefully to pupils' expressions of their needs, successes and anxieties. They follow up with effective action where necessary.
- Leaders are well trained and strongly supported by the proprietor. The good-quality safeguarding culture is evident, for example in leaders' meticulous pre-employment checks and unflinching management of safeguarding issues.
- Pupils report how happy they are at the school. This is backed up by pupils' attitudes to learning: they work with high self-esteem and confidence. Leaders involve parents and carers closely in the welfare of pupils. For example, leaders inform parents of actions staff take to keep pupils safe. These contacts are made by staff immediately following any intervention. Families are invited by leaders to discuss any follow-up work needed to help their children.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory requirements and is fit for purpose.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a) and 9(b)

- Pupils behave courteously and with consideration around the school. Leaders work successfully with parents to help pupils learn independent living skills. Pupils improve their responses to teaching and enjoy the challenges of school.
- Pupils value the school rewards system. They say that it helps them learn. They are clear about which behaviours are not tolerated.

- When pupils' behaviour is not good enough, this is well addressed by leaders. Staff put effective support in place because they analyse well pupils' patterns of good and poor behaviour.
- Pupils learn successfully how to reflect on their own behaviour through the effective implementation of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. As a result, over time, pupils develop self-management skills ready for the next stage of their education or employment and training.
- Pupils are taught how to manage stressful situations and stay calm. The school makes good use of its sensory room, relation therapy, music and art to help pupils express their needs, worries and aspirations.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Paragraph 10

- Bullying is not tolerated, and so incidents are extremely rare. None of the pupils spoken to during the inspection could recall any such episodes.
- Leaders train their staff well. As a result, staff are effective at detecting early signs of poor behaviour and preventing it.
- Leaders have put in place a strong anti-bullying policy. It helps staff know what to do if they suspect bullying may occur. There are, for example, well-used 'safe spaces' in the school. Here, staff give quiet and calming counselling for pupils as needed. This results in pupils getting the help they need in a timely manner.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Paragraph 11

- The high-quality health and safety policy is implemented well. There are efficient daily checks of the key equipment and facilities pupils need to access learning and to stay safe. When repairs to equipment are needed, they are attended to quickly.
- Staff exercise their responsibilities to report any health and safety incidents. Leaders keep learning and social spaces well adjusted to meet the needs of pupils.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- Risk assessments are of a high quality. Risk assessments ensure that staff plan safely for a wide range of learning, for example outdoor visits, physical education and forest school work. The risk assessment policy ensures that staff evaluate the equipment and spaces pupils use and make reasonable adjustments to maintain safety.
- The risk assessments for physical intervention are good. Staff use their physical intervention training safely and thoughtfully. They identify the specific needs of pupils and know how to take account of these when it is necessary to calm pupils and protect them from harm. Record-keeping is of a high standard. This helps leaders carefully track any patterns in the use of physical intervention.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.
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Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is available in hard copy for parents on request. The school does not currently have a website.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Paragraph 32(3)(b)

- Leaders make sure that pupils' education, health and care plans are effectively reviewed. Leaders take into account the views of pupils and carers in the setting and reviewing of targets. Leaders make this information available to pupils' local authorities as appropriate.
- The standard for this paragraph continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- Leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the independent school standards. They have taken appropriate action to ensure that these standards are met consistently. Leaders act with integrity and openness. For example, their records of incidents involving pupils are scrupulously maintained.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They make sure that pupils have independent skills to do well now and in the future.
- Leaders effectively track and evaluate the quality of whole-school strategies. For, example, performance management is used well to link whole-school targets to individual staff targets. This helps staff remain consistent to the values and practices of the school. Staff feel that their training needs are well met.
- Staff morale is high. Staff speak very highly of their leaders and say that they support and challenge effectively. This is evident in the purposeful cooperation between staff and their leaders. Leaders ensure that staff work effectively with pupils' local authorities and with colleagues in other schools. There are good-quality relationships with other local school leaders.
- Leaders work well with the proprietor. The proprietor has a clear vision for the school as an inclusive, safe and aspirational place to learn. Leaders share and promote this view and it is shared by staff. A typical comment from a member of staff was, 'Working here is like watching little miracles happen.' Another said, 'If I won the lottery, I'd still come and work here.'
- This standard continues to be met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	143932
DfE registration number	860/6045
Inspection number	10113657

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jonathan Armitage
Chair	Dawn Houghton
Headteacher	Mrs Lucy Gibbs
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,500–£73,500
Telephone number	01782 987012
Website	www.bluebellschool.co.uk
Email address	csutherland@bluebellschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 June 2018

Information about this school

- Bluebell School opened in June 2017.
- Bluebell School is an independent special school for pupils aged between five and 16 who have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include complex social, emotional and mental health needs, cognitive impairment and/or aspects of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- Pupils are placed in the school by several local education authorities, including Stoke-on-Trent City, Staffordshire, Cheshire East and Cheshire West.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school was inspected in June 2018 and judged to be outstanding.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education as the result of a complaint it had received.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the proprietor.
- The inspector met with members of the teaching, non-teaching, clerical and kitchen staff. These meetings were held without the presence of school leaders.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils and discussed their learning and safety. Throughout the inspection, the inspector talked with pupils about their experience of the school.
- There was a meeting with a parent and the inspector scrutinised the school's records of home school communications.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documentation, including records of behaviour, physical intervention, safeguarding and staff development. The inspector evaluated the quality of risk assessments, health and safety checks, and a range of policies and reports that are available to parents.
- There were two telephone discussions with the local authority officer leading safeguarding in Staffordshire.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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